

“The Council are, moreover, of opinion that Mr. Sadler was not justified in passing a sweeping condemnation on the Reference Catalogue, which is irrelevant to the rest of the article, and is entirely unsupported by the citation of the instances on which his judgment was founded.’

It was resolved that these resolutions be read at the Meeting of the Society, and printed in the next Number of the *Monthly Notices*.

Note on Sir John Herschel's Reference Catalogue of Double Stars.

By Professor Pritchard, F.R.S.

Those astronomers who are seriously engaged, or otherwise interested, in the computation of the orbits of double stars, or are engaged in furnishing data for such investigations, are informed and requested to bear in mind that Sir John Herschel's references to the Catalogues of the two Struves apply solely to the Catalogues as originally published by those most eminent astronomers, and are independent of the corrections which they subsequently found it necessary to make to their original printed observations.

To working astronomers it may perhaps be unnecessary to add that they will find the corrigenda on consulting *Positiones Medice*, page xcii., or the *Recueil des Mémoires présentés à l'Académie des Sciences par les Astronomes de Poulkova etc.*, t. I., St.-Petersbourg, 1853.

Order of Publication of successive Volumes of the Poulkova Observations. By M. Otto Struve.

(Extract from a Letter to A. M. W. Downing.)

In reply to your letter, I beg leave to inform you that vol. viii. of the *Observations de Poulkova* is not yet published. According to a resolution formerly taken, vol. viii. is designed for the Catalogue to be deduced from the meridian observations inserted in vols. vi. and vii. This Catalogue, though the reductions are considerably advanced, is not yet finished; and its publication has been considerably delayed by the lamented death of Dr. von Asten, to whom the work had been entrusted. For these reasons it can hardly be expected that vol. viii. will be published and distributed before 1881. In a similar way vol. x. of the *Observations* is designed to contain the continuation of my micrometrical measures of double stars, but as yet I have hardly been able to begin the reduction of these measures. Therefore vol. x. will not appear for a couple of years; whilst vol. xi., containing the continuation of our fundamental determinations

with the transit instrument, is nearly ready, and will be distributed very shortly.

Similar inquiries to yours have been addressed to me from different quarters. To prevent further misunderstanding, I would feel very much obliged if you would insert in the *Monthly Notices* this account of the reasons why vols. viii. and x. of the *Observations de Poulkova* will be published considerably later than respectively vols. ix. and xi.

Pulkowa, 1879, March 24.

The Nautical Almanac for 1882.

The Superintendent communicates the following errata, which, as referring to the Transit of *Venus*, are of unusual importance:—

‘Presentation copies of the *Nautical Almanac* for 1882 to public Observatories, Institutions, and a few others, require the following corrections:

Page 402	for	contact at Ingress	129°	read	145°
	„	contact at Egress	79°	„	114°

‘The remainder of the impression has been corrected.’

Stellar Magnitudes; a Request to Astronomers.

By Edward C. Pickering, Director of the Harvard College Observatory.

The scales adopted by different observers in their estimates of stellar magnitudes differ considerably from each other, as is well known. As regards the brighter stars, these differences, indeed, are comparatively unimportant; but they become larger and more perplexing when the objects observed are faint. Variations of three or four magnitudes may be expected between the estimates made of the brightness of minute companions seen near a brilliant star. It is needless to point out the inconvenience of this state of affairs, which at times nearly deprives the estimated magnitudes found in Catalogues of their meaning, and consequently of their value.

In the hope of providing a partial remedy for this defect, a series of Photometric Observations of Stars of various magnitudes, situated near the North Pole, has been undertaken at the Harvard College Observatory. The region has been selected as one which may always be conveniently observed in the northern hemisphere, so that the brightness of a star observed in another part of the sky can readily be compared by estimate with any standard polar stars the relative brightness of which may have been determined by photometric measurements.

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